

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

RFP #: DPI 40-EnglishII Scoring

TITLE: English II Scoring

USING AGENCY: Department of Public Instruction

ISSUE DATE: July 31, 2015

ISSUING AGENCY: Department of Public Instruction

Sealed Proposals subject to the conditions made a part hereof will be received until **August 20, 2015 2PM EST** for furnishing services described herein. Proposals received after 2PM EST on August 20, 2015 will be disqualified and will be considered nonresponsive to the terms of this Request for Proposal.

SEND ALL PROPOSALS DIRECTLY TO THE ISSUING AGENCY ADDRESS AS SHOWN BELOW:

Please note that the US Postal Service does not deliver any mail (US Postal Express, Certified, Priority, Overnight, etc.) on a set delivery schedule to this Office. It is the responsibility of the Vendor to have its proposal in this Office by the specified time and date of opening.

DELIVERY ADDRESS:

RFP NO. DPI 40-EnglishII Scoring
NC Department of Public Instruction
Attn: Joni Robbins
301 N. Wilmington Street, Room B04
Raleigh, NC 27601

IMPORTANT NOTE: Indicate firm name and RFP number on the front of each sealed proposal envelope or package, along with the date for receipt of proposals specified above.

Bids submitted via telegraph, facsimile (FAX) machine, telephone, and electronic means, including but not limited to e-mail, in response to this Request for Proposals will not be acceptable.

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to: *Joni Robbins, Section Chief of Purchase and Contract*
Telephone Number: 919-807-3664
Email: joni.robbins@dpi.nc.gov

NOTE: Written questions concerning the specifications in this Request for Proposals will be received until **August 11, 2015 2PM EST**. They must be sent via email to joni.robbins@dpi.nc.gov. Please insert "Questions RFP DPI 40-EnglishII Scoring" as the subject for the email. The questions are to be submitted in the following format:

Citation	Vendor Question	The State's Response
Proposal Section, Page Number		

A summary of all questions and answers will be posted on the internet as an addendum, located under RFP number DPI 40-EnglishII Scoring.

It is the offeror's responsibility to assure that all addenda have been reviewed and, if need be, signed and returned.

<http://www.pandc.nc.gov/>

Within two days after notification of award of a contract, the vendor must register in NC E-Procurement @ Your Service (<http://vendor.ncgov.com>).

EXECUTION OF PROPOSAL

By submitting this proposal, the potential contractor certifies the following:

This proposal is signed by an authorized representative of the firm.

It can obtain insurance certificates as required within 10 calendar days after notice of award.

The cost and availability of all equipment, materials, and supplies associated with performing the services described herein have been determined and included in the proposed cost.

All labor costs, direct and indirect, have been determined and included in the proposed cost.

The Vendor has attended the conference/site visit and is aware of prevailing conditions associated with performing these services (*if applicable*).

The Vendor can and will provide the specified performance bond or alternate performance guarantee (*if applicable*).

The Vendor has read and understands the conditions set forth in this RFP and agrees to them with no exceptions.

The Vendor is registered in NC E-Procurement @ Your Service or agrees to register within two days after notification of contract award.

VENDOR: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Principal Place of Business if different from above (See Attachment B):

Will any of the work under this contract be performed outside the United States?
(If yes, describe in technical proposal.)

Yes

No

N.C.G.S. § 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to, or acceptance by, any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response in this procurement, you attest, for your entire organization and its employees or agents, that you are not aware that any such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of your organization.

BY: _____ TITLE: _____ DATE: _____
(Signature)

(Printed name)

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL

Department of Public Instruction

BY: _____ TITLE: _____ DATE: _____

THIS PAGE MUST BE SIGNED AND INCLUDED IN YOUR PROPOSAL.

Unsigned proposals will not be considered.

RESTRICTIONS AND OTHER NOTICES TO VENDORS

1. The Vendor is cautioned that the requirements of this RFP can only be altered by written Addendum and that verbal communications are of no effect.
2. **Prohibited Communications:** From the issuance date of this RFP through the date the contract is awarded, each Vendor (including its Subcontractors and/or suppliers) is prohibited from having any communications with any person inside or outside the using agency, issuing agency, other government agency office, or body (including the purchaser named above, department secretary, agency head, members of the General Assembly and/or Governor's Office), or private entity, in which the content of Vendor's proposal or qualifications, the contents of another Vendor's proposal, another Vendor's qualifications or ability to perform the contract is discussed. Vendor (including its Subcontractors and/or suppliers) is also prohibited from the transmittal of any other communication of information that has the effect of directly or indirectly influencing the evaluation of proposals and/or the award of the contract.
Vendors not in compliance with this provision shall be disqualified from contract award, unless it is determined that the best interest of the state would not be served by the disqualification. A Vendor's proposal may be disqualified if its Subcontractor and supplier engage in any of the foregoing communications during the time that the procurement is active (i.e., the issuance date of the procurement to the date of contract award). Only the discussions, communications or transmittals of information authorized by the Purchaser in this RFP or general inquiries to the Purchaser regarding the status of the contract award are exempt from this provision.
3. The Vendor is cautioned that DPI may require confirmation in writing of the responses provided during the oral presentation or site visit, if any.
4. The Vendor is notified of the importance of providing responses and/or data that clearly show that minimum requirements have been met.
5. DPI reserves the right to reject proposals deemed incomplete or non-compliant with the requirements described herein.
6. The State objects to and will not be required to evaluate or consider any additional terms and conditions submitted with a Vendor's response. This applies to any language appearing in or attached to the document as part of the Vendor's response. By execution and delivery of this Request for Proposal and response(s), the Vendor agrees that any additional terms and conditions, whether submitted purposely or inadvertently, shall have no force or effect.
7. Regardless of cause, late proposals will not be accepted and will automatically be disqualified from further consideration. It shall be the Vendor's sole risk to ensure delivery at the designated office by the designated time. Late proposals will not be opened and may be returned to the Vendor at the expense of the Vendor or destroyed if requested.

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has an ongoing development process which includes embedded field test items and the development of a new form each year. Included in this development is an English II assessment, which will include constructed response items and will be administered during multiple testing cycles throughout the school year (e.g., fall, spring, summer).

To fulfill the scoring of the English II assessment, this RFP is to solicit solution proposals from Vendors for the:

- collecting of the paper/pencil answer documents from the approximately 115 districts and approximately 75 charter schools in North Carolina,
- scoring of the paper/pencil multiple choice and online constructed responses,
- reporting student-level results to the NCDPI using the specific procedures defined in this RFP,
- meeting with NCDPI officials to ensure coordination and cooperation,
- providing ongoing statistical feedback to the NCDPI project manager to ensure that state and industry standards are being met, and
- design and implement appropriate quality control procedures to ensure high quality services.

When the assessment has been completed, the Vendor will collect the paper/pencil student answer documents to process, scan, and score both the multiple-choice items and the constructed response items. The Vendor will arrange a return shipment system for all completed answer documents. **Overnight shipping is required.**

The NCDPI requires a tracking system for each shipment of completed student answer documents that details the transit of every class in the shipment to the Vendor. All bid responses must describe/identify a tracking system that meets this requirement.

An 8 1/2" x 11" three-part carbonless form must be produced for the purpose of documenting the shipment content. Space must be provided to collect the six-digit Local Education Agency (LEA) school code which must be used to ensure that the information in the six-digit LEA school code field on the class information form is correct. An alternative to this three-part carbonless form may be proposed by the Vendor but NCDPI reserves the sole right to accept or reject any alternative proposed by the Vendor.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

The North Carolina Testing Program was initiated in response to legislation passed by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1977. In response to the legislation, the North Carolina State Board of Education began requiring high school students in North Carolina Public Schools to meet the competency test requirements in order to receive a North Carolina high school diploma. The following section of Public School Law 115C-174.10 from Public School Laws (1996) describes the purpose of testing in North Carolina:

(i) to assure that all high school graduates possess those minimum skills and that knowledge thought necessary to function as a member of society; (ii) to provide a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the education process in order to improve instructional delivery; and (iii) to establish additional means for making the education system at the State, local, and school levels accountable to the public for results.

SECTION 3: CONTRACT TERM

A contract awarded pursuant to this RFP shall have an effective date as provided in the Notice of Award. The term shall be three (3) years and will expire upon the anniversary date of the effective date unless otherwise stated in the Notice of Award, or unless terminated earlier.

SECTION 4: DEFINITIONS

- LEA: Local Education Agency (School Districts)
- NCDPI: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- RFP: Request for Proposal
- TE: Technology Enhanced

SECTION 5: SCOPE OF WORK

This section will describe the assessment and the required scope-of-work. The North Carolina English II End-of-Course Test will be administered during three testing windows in each of the three years specified in this RFP: (1) December–February, (2) May–June and (3) June–September. The forms (three distinct answer key forms) include technology enhanced (TE) items, multiple-choice items, and constructed response items. The Vendor will receive the item responses in two formats: (1) electronic file with student response to an online delivery of the assessment and (2) scan capable answer sheets (with a configuration file of the answer key). Only the online assessment has TE items; but both delivery formats include constructed response items as well as multiple-choice items. Three forms will be selected for administration in the 2015–16 school year. Two of the three forms plus one new form will be administered in the 2016–17 school year; however, the content of the embedded item slots will differ between the two contract years. Two of the three forms plus one new form will be administered in the 2017–18 school year; however, the content of the embedded item slots will differ between the two contract years. The embedded slots may contain multiple-choice, technology-enhanced or constructed response items. The following charts provide (1) item counts by form, (2) possible score points by item and by form, and (3) number of items to be scored across all forms.

Number of Items by Type per Form

Year	Number of Operational Forms	Total Operational Items (per form)	Operational Technology Enhanced (TE) Items (per form)	Operational Multiple-choice Items (per form)	Operational Constructed Response Items (per form)
2015–16	2	53	4	46	3
2016–17	3	53	4	46	3
2017–18	3	53	4	46	3

Number of Possible Score Points by Item and by Form

Year	Technology Enhanced (TE) Items (per form)	Multiple-choice Items (per form)	Unique Constructed-Response Items	Total Number of Possible Score Points
2015–16	4	46	6	56
2016–17	4	46	6	56
2017–18	4	46	6	56

Number of UNIQUE Items for Scoring across all Forms

Year	Technology Enhanced (TE) Items (maximum forms/versions)	Multiple-choice Items (maximum forms/versions)	Constructed-response Items (maximum forms/versions)	Projected Number of Student Responses per Item
2015–16 (2 forms/4 versions)	24	188	14	105,000
2016–17 (3 forms/4 versions)	36	282	21	106,000
2017–18 (3 forms/4 versions)	36	282	21	107,000

The Vendor must provide results on a rolling timeline, meaning answer documents and electronic files will be scored daily as received, not at the conclusion of all files received. To facilitate required preliminary student-level results in the first administration window of December 2015–February 2016, preliminary scoring on a representative subset of the North Carolina student population must be scored and reported to the NCDPI by December 11, 2015. The complete score report file, with all data including operational and field test items from the fall test window of December–February is due to the NCDPI by the last business day in March, 2016. The complete score report file, with all data including

operational and field test items from the spring test window of May–June is due to the NCDPI by the last business day in June 2016.

SECTION 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Scoring Specifications

The Vendor will adhere to the following specifications in scoring the items.

1. Each constructed response will be scored once with a 10 percent back-read of each item, the result being a 98 percent perfect/adjacent agreement.
2. Each constructed response item will have 3 possible score points: 0-1-2.
3. Each TE item has a score value of one point.
4. Each multiple-choice item has a score value of one point. Scorers will code reasons from an agreed upon list for non-scoreable results.
5. Scored test records including a combined score based on all operational items will be returned using the NCDPI portal within 7 business days for paper answer sheets and within 5 business days for online test records.
6. Scores will be provided to the NCDPI daily.
7. If during scoring, the NCDPI Project Director, after careful and deliberate statistical analysis of project data in consultation with the potential vendor may, depending on the scoring methodology employed:
 - a. require the potential contractor to thoroughly retrain scorers,
 - b. require a scorer or group of scored student responses re-scored, with those re-scores final,
 - c. may stop the scoring process entirely at any time deemed necessary. This stoppage may involve retraining, at a minimum, or re-scoring of the entire project up to that point. It shall be the responsibility of the potential contractor to ensure 1) accurate scores and 2) that scoring occurs during the designated scoring window. Any additional costs associated with 5(a), 5(b), and 5(c) above is the sole responsibility of the potential contractor.

B. Project Responsibilities

1. To facilitate the work, the NCDPI will:
 - (A) provide the configuration files for the scan capable answer documents and the online test records;
 - (B) collect all completed electronic test responses and ancillary materials and provide to the potential contractor for processing and scoring; and
 - (C) provide the constructed response items and scoring rubrics (no item development is required as a part of this contract).
2. To facilitate the work, the Vendor will:
 - (A) provide return kits to the districts and charter schools and collect the completed answer documents from the districts and charter schools using the quickest, most efficient means of shipping (materials must be tracked);
 - (B) provide method of direct communication with the NC regional staff to locate student records;
 - (C) provide on-site training and any necessary training materials for regional staff prior to the fall testing window each year;
 - (D) develop the training plan for scoring the constructed response (must be specified in the response to this RFP);
 - (E) develop the training materials including sample student responses for each score point (sample student responses from the 2014–15 embedded field test items will be provided to the Vendor);
 - (F) scan and score the multiple-choice items;
 - (G) image and score the constructed response items;
 - (H) manage the training/qualifying sessions for any proposed human scoring activities;
 - (I) monitor daily the scoring to ensure quality control, retraining scorers when necessary, and resolving score disagreements;
 - (J) provide NCDPI personnel with the capability to monitor the scoring process remotely through access to real-time scoring reports and other data/statistics; and
 - (K) deliver student-level total scores combining all items.

C. Final Summary Reports

The following must be provided to the NCDPI by the date specified in this RFP:

- (A) Constructed response item specific data, including score point distributions and agreement statistics;
- (B) Student-level scoring of the combined multiple-choice and constructed response items;
- (C) Electronic return delivery of all imaged constructed responses.

D. Security

The Vendor must ensure a secure environment to prohibit unauthorized personnel access to North Carolina Testing Program testing materials through deliberate or unintentional actions. Security also refers to and includes oral communication by potential contractor, staff, or readers concerning the scoring operation and content of student responses to the public including the media. The following must be ensured by the Vendor:

1. Scorers must be carefully screened and must understand the importance of security. Each staff member and scorer must sign a non-disclosure document attesting that they will not discuss or reveal the contents of the tests and/or the results of the tests.
2. The Vendor is responsible for creating the non-disclosure document and must provide a copy of this document to the NCDPI Project Director by the date specified in the Project Timeline to ensure it meets NCDPI standards and specifications.
3. Inquiries from the media are to be directed by the Vendor to the NCDPI Project Director.

The Vendor must describe a plan for providing security/confidentiality of (1) all testing materials, (2) student responses, training procedures, and scoring processes, and (3) program results, both throughout the term of this contract (particularly during the scoring process) and afterward. The Vendor shall not, under any condition, make contact with the press regarding testing results. Any contact with the press will be handled through the NCDPI. In addition, to ensure security/confidentiality of the test materials, visitors to potential contractor's central facility to observe any employees at work on the North Carolina Project is prohibited. Any and all training materials are maintained in a secure/confidential manner and are the property of the NCDPI.

SECTION 7: Staffing Requirements

The Vendor must propose appropriate, experienced performance assessment staff to ensure the successful completion of the project. The NCDPI will conduct an on-site visit of the contractor's central headquarters prior to/during the scoring operations. Vendor must specify in detail how scores, related data, and student responses will be handled during the scoring operation. All proposed staffing must be approved by the NCDPI Project Director prior to commencement of the scoring process. The Vendor must propose for this project, personnel directly experienced with public school statewide performance assessments to serve in the key positions and as liaisons with the NCDPI. ALL STAFF ASSIGNED TO THIS PROJECT MUST HAVE A MINIMUM EDUCATION OF A BACHELOR DEGREE FROM AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

SECTION 8: PROJECT TIMELINES

Project Timeline 2015–16

August 20, 2015 2PM EST	Proposals are opened
TBD	Contract awarded
TBD	Initial contract planning meeting
TBD	Contractor submits non-disclosure test security form to NCDPI Project Director for approval
December 1 2015– February 12 2016	Fall test administration window
December 3, 2015	Fall operational scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
March 1, 2016	Final fall summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information
May 2-June 29, 2016	Spring test administration window
May 3, 2016	Spring operational scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
July 8, 2016	Final spring summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information
June 2016– September 16, 2016	Summer test administration window
June 2016	Summer scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
July 2016	Range Finding Meeting

July 2016	Scoring supervisor and scorer training and qualifying
September 23, 2016	Final summer summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information

Project Timeline 2016–17

February 2016	Initial planning meeting for Year 2 of contract
December 1 2016–February 17, 2017	Fall test administration window
December 5, 2016	Fall operational scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
March 1, 2017	Final fall summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information
May 1–June 29, 2017	Spring test administration window
May 2, 2017	Spring operational scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
July 7, 2017	Final spring summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information
June 2017–September 15, 2017	Summer test administration window Delivery of operational student combined multiple-choice and constructed response score due to the NCDPI (spring administrations)
May 1–June 28, 2017	Summer scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
July 7, 2017	Delivery of operational student combined all items score due to the NCDPI (spring administrations)
July 2017	Range Finding Meeting
July 2017	Scoring supervisor and scorer training and qualifying
September 22, 2017	Final summer summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information

Project Timeline 2017–18

February 2017	Initial planning meeting for Year 3 of contract
December 1 2017–February 16, 2018	Fall test administration window
December 4, 2017	Fall operational scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
March 1, 2018	Final fall summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information
May 1–June 28, 2018	Spring test administration window
May 2, 2018	Spring operational scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
July 6, 2018	Final spring summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information
June 2018–September 14, 2018	Summer test administration window
June 2018	Summer scoring begins: Rolling daily scanning and scoring of all items of paper/pencil and online student test forms
July 6, 2018	Final spring summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information
July 2018	Range Finding Meeting
July 2018	Scoring supervisor and scorer training and qualifying
September 21, 2018	Final summer summary reports due to the NCDPI including delivery of embedded field test item information